# CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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FINAL RECORD OF THE SEVEN HUNDRED AND EIGHTY-SEVENTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 5 March 1998, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Hofer (Switzerland)

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The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I declare open the 787th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

Allow me first of all to extend a warm welcome, on behalf of the Conference and on my own behalf, to the distinguished figures who are our guests today - Mr. Jacob Kellenberger, Secretary of State in the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs of Switzerland, and Mrs. Åslaug Haga, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of Norway. Their presence in our midst bears witness to the interest of their Governments in the work of the Conference, and I am certain that their statements will be followed with keen interest.

I should like to inform the Conference that we shall be holding informal open-ended consultations on the programme of work of the Conference at the end of this plenary meeting.

Aside from the Secretaries of State of Switzerland and Norway, I have on my list of speakers for today the representative of Ukraine.

I now invite the Secretary of State in the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs of Switzerland, Mr. Jacob Kellenberger, to make his statement.

Mr. KELLENBERGER (Switzerland) (translated from French): Switzerland is taking the Chair of the Conference on Disarmamentfor the first time this year. This special circumstance gives me the chance to outline to you the views of my country and its expectations of the Conference. The Swiss presidency is of course a result of alphabetical order but this mandate is also a symbol, that of Switzerland's international commitment in the field of security policy. The will to take on its share of responsibility through more active participation in efforts to promote a global security policy based on regional and global cooperation for the purpose of reducing the risks of armed conflict and human suffering is the hallmark of my country's security policy, particularly since the end of the cold war.

By way of example I shall mention the support offered by Switzerland to the peacekeeping activities of the United Nations, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and its involvement in the Partnership for Peace. Added to this are Switzerland's commitments towards the implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, the development of the Ottawa Convention against anti-personnel mines and negotiations under way in Geneva to provide the Biological Weapons Convention with a verification regime.

It is in this spirit that I should like to pay tribute to the remarkable work done by your delegations. More particularly, I should like to mention Ambassador Lars Norberg and his staff on the delegation of Sweden, who, in a difficult situation, did everything in their power to move the deliberations of the Conference forward. I include the new representatives, whose useful imagination has already had a positive impact on our work. Finally, I should like to thank the Secretary-General of the Conference, Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky, his deputy, Mr. Abdelkader Bensmail, and his team for providing us with valuable counsel for the pursuit of our tasks.

(Mr. Kellenberger, Switzerland)

Switzerland's positive attitude towards the Conference on Disarmament, which my country is proud to host, cannot erase the difficulties encountered by the institution since the end of 1996. Although the political and strategic context in which the Conference exercises its mandate today has considerably evolved, the Conference has not so far drawn the necessary practical or thematic consequences from this change. Hence it is up to the Conference to meet more than one challenge if it wishes to remain the multilateral forum for negotiations in the area of disarmament and arms control par excellence. The negotiations on the question of anti-personnel mines revealed in this connection that the international community can, if it sees a need to do so, find ways to achieve security policy objectives outside the Conference on Disarmament. The Conference on Disarmament should now to our mind demonstrate its ability to take on board the new trends in the area of disarmament and arms control, for the Conference will have to adapt to new realities so as to continue to display its usefulness. In this connection it is imperative for the Conference to emerge from its reorientation phase and resume the path of negotiation through dialogue among its main actors on the basis of a shared political will. Failing that, the Conference would run the risk of being confined to a secondary role on the international scene - which we certainly do not wish.

The Swiss Government believes that the Conference should first of all take account of the concerns of the international community in respect of weapons of mass destruction. Consequently, Switzerland views as legitimate the efforts designed to include nuclear disarmament issues on the agenda of the Conference. These efforts are inspired by two considerations that we share: an observed disparity in the world nuclear order, and a noted imbalance between defence capabilities and the state of international relations after the cold war.

In the nuclear area, Switzerland is ready to accept that the multilateral framework is perhaps not the best-suited for deciding on how and how fast to effect a reduction of nuclear arsenals. But we believe that the Conference is destined to launch negotiations in areas related to nuclear disarmament and nuclear arms control, beginning with that of a halt to the production of fissile material for military purposes, that is, the draft international treaty on a "cut-off".

As far as anti-personnel mines are concerned, the Swiss Government believes that, following the first conference to review the 1980 Convention on Conventional Weapons and the felicitous conclusion of the "Ottawa Process", we should first of all ensure that the instruments adopted in these forums enter into force as rapidly as possible. This spring Switzerland intends to ratify revised Protocol II to the 1980 Convention and in the same period to ratify the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction and indeed the two chambers of the Parliament have just given their approval. Switzerland has had occasion to say repeatedly that it sees no objection to the Conference on Disarmament dealing with anti-personnel mines if it so wishes. This remains our position. However, the results of these deliberations should not jeopardize the above-mentioned instruments, or run counter to them. The

(Mr. Kellenberger, Switzerland)

discussions should, on the contrary, promote their universality. If the Conference is ready to respect these guidelines, Switzerland does not object, for instance, to a ban on the transfer of anti-personnel mines being drawn up here.

In Ottawa the international community acquired a valuable instrument which should extend a stepped-up commitment in the area of mine clearance. Between 1993 and 1997 Switzerland earmarked 25 million francs for mine clearance operations abroad. For the current year (1998), Switzerland will spend 5 million for this purpose. Moreover, the Swiss Government has decided to set up an International Centre for Humanitarian Demining in Geneva. Specifically, the role of this centre will be to provide four services: to set up a permanent think-tank entrusted with analysing operational issues in the area of mine clearance; to organize an annual conference of directors of United Nations mine clearance centres; to create a system of information management between the United Nations Secretariat and the mine clearance centres; and to organize a training course for future directors of mine clearance operations and specialists in information management.

In agreement with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations in New York and the United Nations Office at Geneva, Switzerland has already made available the necessary resources for the organization of the first conference of directors of United Nations mine clearance centres. This meeting, which is taking place at this moment in the Palais des Nations, is designed to enable the demining unit in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to establish direct communication links with mine clearance centres and to take stock of current demining operations. Of course, this meeting is not directly linked to the Conference on Disarmament. There is, however, no doubt that its holding in Geneva and your presence, distinguished delegates, contribute to creating a climate conducive to success. The concentration of know-how favours specific action as well as parallel thinking on the work of the Conference.

I would also like to mention the question of small arms. These weapons cause the bulk of losses of human lives in present-day armed conflicts. Their transfer to and presence in war zones has justly prompted a large number of studies and initiatives lately. Before taking a stand for or against a role for the Conference in this complex area, we think that answers should be found to three questions. Are global solutions appropriate, or would it be more promising to promote regional or subregional cooperation? Is it worth trying to "globalize" existing regional experience? If global solutions prove realistic for certain aspects, what are the bodies that should handle them? The Swiss Government for its part believes that the Conference could quite legitimately deal with one aspect or other of the problem of small arms, but taking account of all efforts already underway in other forums.

Within the context of the synergies developed between the Conference and your diplomatic missions, mention should be made of an international seminar on wound ballistics held at the beginning of October 1997 in Thun, in Switzerland. This seminar, which brought together about 100 members of the diplomatic corps, doctors, members of the military and technical and legal

(Mr. Kellenberger, Switzerland)

experts, made it possible to understand more clearly the specific problems of ballistics and its traumatic effects. Practical tests showed that projectiles used legally today can produce the same effects as dum-dum bullets, though these have been banned for a century. The documentation circulated today to the missions of member States and observers in the Conference should help to publicize widely the subject matter and the results of the seminar in the run-up to the forthcoming conference to review the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons. Switzerland plans to organize similar events on the subject of testing methodology and the question of "military need necessity" as it applies to projectiles for small-calibre weapons in order to shed light on the issue.

The Swiss Government's basic idea is that the Conference on Disarmament should keep a degree of flexibility as regards the choice of subjects on which it intends to negotiate. On this point we believe that reflection should be on the substance of the topics addressed by the Conference rather than on procedural issues. Nonetheless, it seems to us that a further explanation of the current deadlock is to be found in the Conference's methods of work. Following the example of what has been initiated by the United Nations Secretary-General, the Conference will not be able to avoid reform, particularly as some 20 States are seeking to be admitted as members, while almost 50 countries have observer status. In the view of the Swiss Government, there is no objective criterion which justifies the definite exclusion of any of these candidates. Hence I wish to make an appeal to the Conference in favour of its openness so that it acquires universal status.

The Conference should bear two criteria in mind when addressing its methods of work. The first concerns flexibility, through adjustment of the cycle of meetings to the pace of negotiations and action to grant the Conference the initiative to define its programme of work. The second criterion for reform is that of continuity. Breaks in debates should be prevented in order to avoid difficult resumptions which jeopardize what has been achieved in earlier negotiations. The creation of a bureau of the Conference on Disarmament would also greatly facilitate the conduct of business and the identification of new subjects for negotiations outside plenary meetings. The search for new methods of work would not push the CD into unknown territory - quite the contrary. The United Nations system offers sufficient examples which the Conference could draw on as a source of inspiration without harming the unique nature of the institution, including its decision-making machinery, to which certain States seem to be very attached. This is why my Government believes that the question of reforms should not become hostage to a sterile debate. It would be better to take advantage of the calm to be observed on the political plane to carry through a profound procedural reform.

It is in this spirit that I would like to invite the Conference on Disarmament to acquire a new identity enabling it to respond to the changes that have occurred in recent years so as to be more representative and more sensitive to the security demands of the third millennium.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the Secretary of State in the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs of Switzerland for his important statement. I now call on the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of Norway, Mrs. Åslaug Haga, to address the Conference.

Mrs. HAGA (Norway): I am certainly very pleased to be here today to address the Conference on Disarmament and to pay our respect to you, Mr. President, for your dedicated and skilful efforts to help the Conference reach agreement on a programme of work. We trust that these efforts will lead to agreement, perhaps even in this meeting, which can enable the Conference to make the transition from a protracted wrangle on procedural problems to real negotiations on the important substantive issues before us. We welcome and support your latest proposals on how to move forward. As we accept that there are differing and at time even conflicting views on what should be given priority, we would also be willing to discuss issues that to us may be of less urgency. Your endeavours have helped create a momentum which we should all make use of.

I would also like to commend your predecessor, Ambassador Norberg of Sweden, who made such an effort to set us off to a good start, creating a positive and non-confrontational atmosphere and leading the CD to early agreement on its agenda for 1998. May I also express our compliments to the Secretary-General of the Conference, Mr. Petrovsky, and his deputy, Mr. Bensmail, and the members of the secretariat.

My Government is firmly committed to the efforts of the CD, and other global efforts, to promote global security through multilateral negotiations on disarmament, non-proliferation and other security-related issues. In these efforts, we will base ourselves on principles which are crucial in any deliberations on the security of nations, to build mutual trust through a concept of common security and through measures of transparency, confidence-building and weapons reductions.

Many wise words have been said in this chamber about the changing global security agenda of the 1990s, the first decade of the post-cold-war era. The Conference on Disarmament has ample reason to be proud of its ability to address some of the most crucial issues on this security agenda. The Convention on Chemical Weapons and the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty, both negotiated by the CD, were landmark achievements in the global effort to promote real disarmament and to prevent further proliferation in two major weapons areas. It is important that these conventions are ratified by as many countries as possible without further delays. My Government will continue to give active political and material support to the work of OPCW in The Hague and of the future CTBTO in Vienna, to monitor effective implementation of the provisions of these important treaties.

The need to prevent the use of the immense destructive capabilities of modern arms, and the development of new, costly weapons systems, will continue to be a major objective for global disarmament negotiations. The changing global security agenda must continue to address existing and future threats from weapons of mass destruction. This task is far from being achieved.

(Mrs. Haga, Norway)

Today's security and disarmament agenda must also, squarely and effectively, confront the threat from conventional armaments: weapons that kill people in ongoing conflicts. The results of our work will be measured not only in terms of the treaties and conventions we have achieved through this Conference, or the work of the bodies we have set up to implement agreements reached. It will be measured also and not least significantly, by its impact on the ground - whether the work of global security negotiations has a meaningful impact on the security of individual human beings, particularly of those who live in areas of war and conflict. Therefore, my Government will also be guided by the need to seek concrete and practical results to prevent death and destruction in ongoing conflicts. We are convinced that arms control and disarmament approaches must make their contributions to ongoing United Nations and global efforts to prevent conflicts and to find solutions to those tragedies which continue to defy the search for peaceful solutions.

This is an ambitious task which requires flexible and innovative approaches. If global efforts are blocked over a long period of time by a lack of global consensus, they will have to be supplemented by regional agreements or by agreed bans/moratoria on particular types of weapons, negotiated by countries willing to make voluntary commitments to abstain from the procurement and use of such weapons.

As we get closer to the next century, we need more than ever a truly comprehensive approach to global security issues. To achieve such an objective, the CD, with its current membership, is not comprehensive enough.

Let me set forth our position on some of the major policy areas before the Conference. Nuclear disarmament issues continue to be a primary preoccupation of the international community. Our ultimate goal remains complete nuclear disarmament. This goal can best be served by the promotion of progressive steps toward the elimination of these weapons. At times the steps may be frustratingly small. We acknowledge that there have been significant reductions in nuclear arsenals and the probability of nuclear confrontations. The overall direction is encouraging, although the number of nuclear weapons is still much too high.

The nuclear-weapon States have an obligation, enshrined in the NPT, to reduce the role of nuclear weapons in international politics. The codification of the systematic and progressive efforts to reduce nuclear weapons undertaken by the United States of America and the Russian Federation is an example of nuclear-weapons States living up to this obligation. Further concrete progress demonstrated by the nuclear-weapons States in this regard would be welcome. The START II treaty should be ratified as soon as possible and negotiations on a START III treaty should commence immediately after the START II treaty is in force.

The particular responsibility of nuclear-weapons States for nuclear disarmament must be maintained. This is why it is impossible, both in political and practical terms, to transfer the responsibility for negotiations on nuclear disarmament from the nuclear-weapons States to multilateral forums.

(Mrs. Haga, Norway)

In our view this weakens the obligations on the part of the nuclear-weapons States to pursue in good faith, and bring to a conclusion, negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control.

Although we believe that the CD should not be mandated to negotiate nuclear-weapon reductions, we see a clear role for the CD in questions related to nuclear disarmament and nuclear arms control. The international community has a legitimate interest in being informed about progress achieved as well as difficulties and challenges in the process of nuclear disarmament. By establishing a procedure for reporting on nuclear issues, the CD could serve as an important forum for information exchange between nuclear-weapons States and non-nuclear-weapons States. Increased transparency on nuclear issues could enhance confidence and reduce distrust, and thereby be conducive to a more constructive and dynamic international security climate. We believe that the proposals submitted by South Africa and Belgium on a mandate for the CD to commence substantive discussions on nuclear disarmament issues are both positive and constructive initiatives which should provide a basis for further dialogue. These proposals should be considered carefully.

Negotiations on an agreement prohibiting the production of fissile material for weapons purposes should be the priority item on the agenda of the CD. After the conclusion of the CTBT, cut-off negotiations would be in accordance with the "Principles and objectives" agreed at the NPT Review Conference in 1995. A cut-off agreement is an important means of reducing the availability of fissile material.

It is also important to work towards greater openness regarding the stocks of fissile material held by nuclear Powers. As a first step, the nuclear Powers could, on a voluntary basis, provide detailed information on their stocks of plutonium and highly enriched uranium. A second step could be to ensure cooperative measures to clarify and confirm those declarations. As a third step, the nuclear Powers could permit international inspection of their stocks, with the aim of ensuring that the inventory in storage can be taken out only for non-weapons purposes. As a fourth step, agreed monitored net reductions from these stockpiles could be introduced. In addition, consistent and stringent international standards of accounting and security for fissile materials should be established. Norway made a proposal to this end at the first session of the PrepCom for the 2000 NPT Review Conference. This is now part of the agenda for the Review Conference and may be further discussed during the second PrepCom starting here in Geneva next month. We would also be prepared to look into how the concept of transparency regarding fissile material can be integrated into the work of the CD.

The Convention on a total ban on anti-personnel landmines represents an important achievement both in humanitarian and disarmament terms. The APL Convention should serve as a practical tool in our efforts to put an end to the human suffering caused by the use of anti-personnel landmines. This Convention stands out as the principal instrument in this field. The challenge facing us now is to make the Convention universal and to implement its humanitarian goals. To ensure the realization of the humanitarian

(Mrs. Haga, Norway)

objectives, concerted efforts are called for. It is important that the implementation of these goals gives scope both for joint efforts by the international community and for national contributions of individual countries. For its part, the Norwegian Government will allocate 120 million United States dollars over the next five years or mine clearance activities, care and rehabilitation of mine victims, and mine awareness programmes.

Not all States are in a position to sign the mine ban Convention. We therefore recognize the continued importance of amended Protocol II to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons. This Protocol will hopefully enter into force later this year, which in turn will provide for the commencement of annual meetings of the States parties. We welcome the opportunity to discuss further improvements of the Protocol, inter alia regarding anti-tank mines.

Geneva may be one focal point in our efforts to reduce and ultimately end the problems caused by anti-personnel landmines. Here we have a unique blend of disarmament and humanitarian expertise. Several international organizations located in Geneva, like UNHCR, WHO, UNDP and ICRC, are directly or indirectly dealing with landmine-related problems. Shortly, at the initiative of Switzerland, as we heard earlier today, the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining will be established.

In September last year the text of the APL Convention was made available to the member and participating non-member delegations to this forum (CD/1478). We would welcome work in the CD which actually could promote the universalization of the total ban on APLs in conformity with the norms now established by the APL Convention, and would be willing to take part in any constructive dialogue to this end.

Conventional armaments are already a part of the CD's agenda. This issue needs to be addressed in a more focused manner. The CD may provide a forum for a coherent discussion of various dimensions and complexities of the problem. In particular, we should recognize the need for appropriate measures to reduce significantly the uncontrolled stream of small arms and light weapons in crisis or conflict areas.

In the 1990s, small arms have killed far more people in armed struggle compared to bombs and tanks. In many countries, the excessive concentration of small arms represents a threat to the stability of States, and an obstacle to conflict resolution and the development of their populations.

In December last year, a *Norwegian initiative on small arms transfers* was launched with the support of the Norwegian Government. Behind this initiative are four research institutions and humanitarian organizations, among them the Norwegian Red Cross. The Norwegian initiative will, inter alia, in May this year, organize together with ICRC, a seminar on the international humanitarian law aspects of small arms.

(Mrs. Haga, Norway)

Urgent action is needed to combat the illicit trade in conventional weapons, in particular small arms. Important progress has been made in regional bodies with regard to illicit trade, notably the OAS work on the Inter-American Convention against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives, and Other Related Materials. The threat to States and individuals represented by the illicit trade with small arms should also be addressed at the global level to facilitate further regional and subregional efforts.

In the view of the Norwegian Government, one should start looking into what possible contributions the CD could make in addressing the problems of illicit trade in conventional weapons and small arms.

The CD may also have a useful role in discussing the complex issue of licit trade of conventional weapons, including small arms. There have been several initiatives to ensure greater transparency in the armaments trade, including the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. But as we all know, we are far from a situation of real transparency.

Experience at the country and regional level provides the inspiration for further work. In Africa, Mali is one of several countries where there has been a concerted effort to collect small arms after the settlement of internal conflicts. Especially encouraging is the proposal put forward by Mali to establish a moratorium on small arms for interested West African countries. The Norwegian Government has pledged 2.5 million United States dollars towards the implementation of the proposed moratorium.

Several regional bodies have developed guidelines or codes of conduct regulating the trade in conventional weapons, including small arms. The UNDC work on guidelines for international arms transfers as well as the Small Arms Panel have also provided useful recommendations in this area.

There is an unquestionable need for the international community to take further action in the area of small arms, based on country and regional experience.

There is no current multilateral agreement which can fully prevent weaponization of outer space. Space-related activities do not attract as much attention as in the past. In the disarmament context questions related to outer space have not played any prominent role for some time. However, this year several members of the CD have expressed the view that the Conference should take up work in this respect. We recognize that there is no arms race taking place in outer space today. We acknowledge and accept that outer space is subject to different kinds of military use. But we think that there is merit in preventive action aimed at excluding future positioning of weapons in outer space. Norway therefore supports the establishment of an ad hoc committee with a mandate to negotiate a convention preventing weaponization of outer space. Although the focus has changed, one may benefit from earlier work done in this forum on the subject.

(Mrs. Haga, Norway)

Let me also take this opportunity to welcome the initiative of the Netherlands on appointing a special coordinator on the issue of transparency in armaments. We encourage such an initiative and we would also support the re-establishment of an ad hoc committee on this issue.

It was an important step forward when the Ad Hoc Group on the verification protocol to the Biological Weapons Convention last year started to negotiate on the basis of a rolling text. Although progress is being made in the negotiations, there is a need for even more focused deliberations. We would like to see the work of the Group come to an end as soon as possible, so that a special conference to adopt a verification protocol can be held in 1999.

Finally, on CD reform, let me return to the question of whether our Conference, in its present form and with its present methods of work, has managed to keep pace with the changing security agenda in terms of its ability to quickly address new and emerging issues and its ability to combine global and more regional approaches.

We believe that the CD is in urgent need of reform. Reform issues such as membership, working methods and agenda should be approached in a comprehensive way. These questions carry much political substance and have a direct impact on the matters before the Conference.

The reputation, relevance and political legitimacy of the Conference are closely linked to its membership. It is difficult to explain and justify why countries have to be excluded as members of this body, an exclusion which appears to be rather accidental. Membership of the CD should be open to all countries wishing such membership. The Conference has been referred to as a "club". We believe a notion of exclusivity is harmful in addressing problems which require inclusiveness. The CD should be seen as a serious, responsible, open-minded and open-ended body, not a secluded forum for those who, by a strange twist of fate, happen to be among the selected.

In our view, the present working methods of the CD do not facilitate the smooth operation of this body. We seem to spend an inordinate time each year on endless discussions on the re-appointment of special coordinators, re-establishment of ad hoc committees, adoption of a formal, seemingly unchangeable, agenda. Special coordinators or ad hoc committees should be allowed to finish their work. It might be sensible for the Conference to set a time limit for the work, but this may not necessarily coincide with the calendar year. We have much sympathy for the ideas commendably put forward by the delegation of Chile in this respect, which have earned the support of other members of the Conference.

The agenda of any forum should reflect a purpose. This means that an agenda should be a guiding instrument for the work, and hence be adjusted to changing needs and to what is of current interest and importance. Of course, we recognize that we do not always share the same priorities, but it does not follow that we have to resort to rigidity and irrelevance.

(Mrs. Haga, Norway)

We would like to see work started immediately on the reform questions, irrespective of activities on what are referred to as matters of substance. We would welcome and support the immediate appointment of either three special coordinators for the specific issues or one special coordinator to cover, in a comprehensive way, all aspects of the reform questions.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of Norway for her important statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Ukraine, Ambassador Maimeskul.

Mr. MAIMESKUL (Ukraine): Mr. President, let me first of all warmly congratulate you on your assumption of the responsible and honourable duties of President of the CD, all the more so as you represent Switzerland, a country praised worldwide for its contribution to the establishment and application of international humanitarian law and as being the unique place for multilateral disarmament negotiations.

I should like to take this opportunity to welcome the substantial contributions made by Mrs. Åslaug Haga, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of Norway, and by Mr. Jakob Kellenberger, Secretary of State in the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs of Switzerland. I should also like to extend my appreciation to Ambassador Lars Norberg of Sweden for his great efforts to add new dynamics to CD activities. The invariable support given to the CD by its Secretary-General, Vladimir Petrovsky, its Deputy Secretary-General, Abdelkader Bensmail, and the secretariat staff deserves the gratitude of all delegations, including mine. May I also cordially welcome the Ambassadors and heads of the delegation who have joined us in the 1998 session?

Last year was obviously the year of the search for new opportunities for the future work of the CD after completion of negotiations on two significant disarmament instruments: the CWC and the CTBT. Nuclear issues were at the heart of the search. Delegations were split almost equally into two groups: those who declared "nuclear disarmament" a priority formed one of them, whereas those who advocated the immediate commencement of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) formed the other. Moreover, quite a number of delegations, including ours, supported both options, which are nothing more than two sides of the same coin. ,In fact, the vast majority of States, as parties to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, have committed themselves to the complete elimination of nuclear weapons and reaffirmed this objective in the "Principles and objectives for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament", namely in the "nuclear disarmament" clause in paragraph 4 (b). On the other hand, almost all States still remaining outside the NPT have repeatedly underlined their hope of seeing a world free of nuclear weapons. Therefore, within the CD we are dealing with two concepts of tackling one large issue, that of nuclear disarmament. According to the first concept, the CD should elaborate a kind of framework for the whole process from the initial to the final step. The second focuses its attention on one relatively self-contained step - an FMCT - and does not foresee any other possible issue.

(Mr. Maimeskul, Ukraine)

The common denominator for work under agenda item 1 consists, in our view, in negotiating one issue which is ripe for negotiation and carrying out exploratory work on one or several relevant issues.

We are aware of an existing view that the "cut-off" of future fissile material production is a non-proliferation issue unrelated to nuclear disarmament. However, from the Ukrainian perspective, eventual FMCT negotiations should be conducted within the framework of an ad hoc committee under agenda item 1, "Cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament". The de jure termination of the nuclear arms race is not possible without a non-discriminatory, legally binding agreement to ban future fissile material production. The principal objective of an FMCT is to exclude completely the risk of a resumption of the nuclear arms race globally as well as at the regional level. We therefore share the view that an FMCT should take on board all declared nuclear-weapon States, as well as those having the potential of becoming one. In parallel, a working group within the above-mentioned ad hoc committee might conduct exploratory work on the politically and technically sensitive issue of excessive stockpiles of fissile materials without excluding the possibility of considering the issue of a complete ban. We have no objections to the functioning, within the ad hoc committee on agenda item 1, of working groups conducting activities in the spirit of the proposals of South Africa in document CD/1483 and Belgium in document CD/1496. We understand that further consultations on agenda item 1 are needed to discuss seriously all relevant proposals put forward in this and previous years.

CD agenda item 4, on negative security assurances (NSA), occupies an important place in the set of nuclear issues. For Ukraine, which already on 16 July 1990 announced in the Declaration of State Sovereignty its intention of becoming a future non-nuclear-weapon State, which intention was realized on 1 June 1996 by getting rid of the last nuclear warhead from - I stress - the world's third largest nuclear arsenal, the conclusion of an international legally binding agreement on NSA has been and remains the priority issue within the CD. It is worth while mentioning here the positive experience acquired by Ukrainian experts as the result of cooperation with colleagues from the nuclear-weapon States in the course of the elaboration of the "Memorandum on security assurances in connection with Ukraine's accession to the NPT" and other related documents signed on 5 December 1994 in Budapest, Hungary. The provisions of the Memorandum were referred to in the "Charter for a distinctive partnership between Ukraine and NATO", signed on 9 July 1997 in Madrid. On this occasion, I cannot pass over in silence the security assurances provided to the non-nuclear-weapon States under the nuclear-weapon-free-zone agreements and Security Council resolutions adopted on the basis of the unilateral, individual declarations made by the nuclear-weapon States, which however are not of a legally binding nature.

The already mentioned document on "Principles and objectives for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament", in its paragraph 8 ("Security assurances"), urges us to take the next logical step - to conclude a multilateral, international, legally binding agreement on NSA. From Ukraine's perspective, such an agreement should be based on the following: a commitment

(Mr. Maimeskul, Ukraine)

on the part of the nuclear-weapon States to respect the independence, sovereignty and existing borders of the non-nuclear-weapon States; a realization that the very fact of possessing nuclear weapons enables a nuclear-weapon State to exert political and other pressures on non-nuclear-weapon States, even if the threat to use nuclear weapons is not being declared overtly; a commitment by the nuclear-weapon States to refrain from political, economic and other forms of pressure on non-nuclear-weapon States with a view to gaining advantages at the expense of the latter's sovereign rights; and a provision for the clearly defined responsibility of a nuclear-weapon State in case of the violation of its basic obligations. As the probability of using nuclear weapons has now substantially diminished, emphasis should be placed on elaborating provisions as to how the international community could counteract possible encroachment by a nuclear-weapon State on the sovereignty, territorial integrity or economic security of the non-nuclear-weapon States.

A future agreement should incorporate the understanding that negative security assurances alone are insufficient. It must also foresee positive security assurances.

Negotiations leading to a legally binding agreement on NSA should be conducted, in our view, within the framework of the relevant CD ad hoc committee. We would consider a proposal to elaborate such an agreement within another international forum which has not as yet a body to conduct such negotiations untimely, to say the least.

Ukraine, proceeding from the experience it has acquired in missile-building and its interest in the exploration and peaceful use of outer space, is ready to support the proposed decision to appoint a special coordinator on agenda item 3, his task being to update the existing, or prepare a new, mandate for an ad hoc committee on outer space. In this connection, we greatly appreciate Canada's proposal (document CD/1487).

In recent years we have witnessed the cardinal changes which have occurred in the international community's stance with regard to the issue of anti-personnel landmines (APLs). The noble goals of the Ottawa Process to achieve a complete ban on APLs cannot and should not leave a single country in the world indifferent. Ukraine expressed its support of this goal by voting in favour of United Nations General Assembly resolution 52/38 A, although my country has not yet signed the Ottawa Convention. This is due first of all to the fact that Ukraine inherited from the former Soviet Union considerable stocks of APLs. Their destruction within the four-year term pursuant to the Convention is not possible without considerable financial assistance from the international community. At the same time, we understand that such international financial support should rather be directed towards assistance in demining, medical treatment for and the rehabilitation of the victims of APLs.

Therefore, at the present stage, our State deems it necessary to promote a reliable blockage of the supply of APLs to the conflict areas, the latter being impossible without the conclusion of a multilateral agreement banning

(Mr. Maimeskul, Ukraine)

the transfer of APLs. The parties to this agreement should be the States holding leading positions in the manufacturing and stockpiling of APLs and all potential exporters thereof. This agreement will not be complementary to the Ottawa Convention in the sense of legal obligations, but might provide almost universal support to one of the key commitments of the Convention - the prohibition of the transfer of APLs. In the hope of achieving such an agreement within the CD, Ukraine voted in favour of United Nations General Assembly resolution 52/38 H and became a co-sponsor of the CD draft decision (CD/1495) on the appointment of a special coordinator on the issue of APLs. The next step in this direction should be the establishment of an ad hoc committee on APLs.

In general, we share the view that the CD has the potential to deal further with conventional disarmament. Therefore, we support the appointment of a special coordinator on transparency in armaments, as proposed by the Netherlands in document CD/1494.

Having said all this, Mr. President, I would like to respond to the latest initiative you put forward, through our Coordinators, on 2 March. We consider it a timely effort directed at pushing our Conference along the road to substantive work this year, and therefore support it.

In conclusion, I would like to inform the Conference about subsequent steps taken by Ukraine in the field of nuclear non-proliferation, which is especially appropriate in connection with the Preparatory Commission for the 2000 NPT Review Conference to be held in Geneva next month. On 17 December 1997 the Verkhovna Rada (Ukraine's Parliament) ratified an agreement between Ukraine and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) on the application of safeguards in connection with the NPT, which was reflected in document CD/1491. I would like to underline that on 22 January 1998 this agreement entered into force. The importance of this even cannot be overestimated. The safeguards agreement is one of the basic measures regulating verification of the implementation of the NPT. The set of measures envisaged by the agreement is an integral part of arms control and the prevention of the proliferation of nuclear weapons, as well as of the illicit traffic in nuclear materials. With the entering into force of the agreement on safeguards in connection with the NPT, Ukraine upgraded its national system of accounting, control and physical protection of nuclear materials, as well as the legal basis for control of the export and import of nuclear materials.

This event is of outstanding importance, particularly against the background of the approved IAEA programme to strengthen and improve the effectiveness of the safeguards system as a contribution to the objectives of global nuclear non-proliferation.

By introducing the IAEA inspection regime in Ukraine, our country is taking a further logical step towards enhancing international cooperation with a view to strengthening global stability.

**The PRESIDENT** (translated from French): I thank the representative of Ukraine for his statement and the kind words he addressed to me. Do any other delegations wish to take the floor? Since none do, let me remind you before closing this meeting that in 10 minutes' time we will hold informal consultations on the programme of work of the Conference, in this room. The next plenary meeting of the Conference will be held on Thursday 12 March at 10 a.m.

**The meeting rose at 11.15 a.m.**